

Amendments to the Abstract:

In the English translation document, please add the abstract at page 13 written line 1, as follows:

--ABSTRACT

The invention relates to a switching device for which a license database is used in which the software modules and respective license information associated therewith are stored, and wherein a configuration of at least one of these software modules triggers an interaction between the license database and a computer-readable data carrier, thereby generating hardware characteristic information. Said hardware characteristic information and the license information of the at least one software module are transmitted by the switchboard computer via a communication link to a license manager. Said license manager generates a license confirmation information and retransmits the same to the switchboard computer. The license confirmation information in the switchboard computer decides on the authorization of the at least one software module.--